



IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Grand Canyon National Park  
P.O. Box 129  
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023-0129

December 8, 2000

Dear Friend of the Grand Canyon:

Reference: Grand Canyon National Park, Packages 049, 053, 228

Subject: Comments on proposed projects (general scoping)

The National Park Service (NPS) is in the initial stages of planning for multiple projects at Grand Canyon National Park. These projects are expected to start construction this fiscal year or the following fiscal year. All of these projects are needed to repair problems with existing infrastructure, to better protect natural and cultural resources, to provide a safer, more enjoyable visitor experience, or to enable park staff to complete their jobs more safely and effectively. They all are either called for, or are consistent with, the park's *General Management Plan*.

Environmental assessments will be prepared to document the decision making process for these projects. The projects are summarized below (listed in no particular order), along with a brief justification for why the work is needed:

1. **Backcountry and River Permits Office.** This project proposes to construct an office to administer backcountry and river permitting and provide visitor contact. This office would be located in the Grand Canyon Village area. There is some desire to locate the office in the vicinity of Bright Angel trailhead to enhance visitor contact with trail users. However, there are also concerns of locating a new structure near the rim of the canyon. Currently the proposal is to utilize the Maswik Transportation Center as the consolidated backcountry and river permits office. This facility is needed because the existing backcountry and river permits functions are located in three different buildings, which causes inefficiency and confusion to visitors.
2. **Parkwide Restrooms.** This project proposes to rehabilitate existing or construct new restrooms throughout Grand Canyon National Park. Composting, vault, and flush systems are being considered and would be utilized depending on location. Locations being considered on the North Rim include Cape Royal, Point Imperial, Widforss Trailhead, North Kaibab Trailhead, North Rim Campground, North Rim Group Campground, Tuweep Ranger Station, and Toroweep Overlook. Locations being considered within the inner canyon include Horseshoe Mesa, Three Mile House, Phantom Ranch, Bright Angel Campground, Monument, Hermit Trail, Tapeats, and Tanner. Locations being considered on the South Rim include Yavapai Point, South Kaibab Trailhead, Grandview Trailhead, Buggelin Hill, Tusayan Museum, Desert View Point, Desert View Campground, Bright Angel Trailhead, Mather Campground, Hermits Rest, and Hopi Point.

This project is needed because there is an insufficient number of existing facilities, which results in complaints, sanitation problems, and health concerns for visitors and employees. The lack of facilities in many areas has resulted in human waste, toilet paper, and diapers scattered throughout the landscape. Many of the existing facilities are not universally accessible, undersized, and/or deteriorating.

3. **Desert View Road Relocation and Entrance Station.** This project proposes to expand Desert View into a transportation hub of the East Rim with orientation and transit facilities. Proposed activities include realignment of Desert View Drive, relocation of the existing entrance station, construction of a parking lot, construction of a bus shuttle loop and transit pavilion, construction of picnic areas, and a reconfiguration of existing and expanded visitor services and management support facilities.

This project is needed because the existing facilities can not adequately accommodate existing use during the peak summer months creating an unsafe environment, degrading visitor experience, and impacting natural and cultural resources in the vicinity. Visitor use at the East Entrance is expected to increase from 1.8 million (1997) to 3.5 million visitors in 2010.

Before we begin preparing the environmental assessments for these projects, we would like to hear your viewpoints on the facilities and any issues or concerns you have regarding construction and use of one or all of these facilities. Please send your comments to:

Sara White, Chief Compliance Officer  
Grand Canyon National Park  
P.O. Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Please be aware that names and addresses of respondents may be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety. We would appreciate receiving your comments no later than January 31, 2001. If you have any questions regarding the projects, please call Sara White at 520-638-7956.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Alston  
Acting Superintendent